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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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III. Replies received from Governments

Bolivia

[Original: Spanish]
[25 June 2007]

1. A nuclear-weapon-free zone cannot be established in the Middle East unless Israel adheres to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and becomes a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

2. It is unlikely that Israel will adhere to the Treaty or become a member of IAEA, given that one of its territorial defence policies is to increase its nuclear war capacity. This defence policy forces the countries in the region to adopt alternative measures to maintain peace.

3. The most feasible alternative measure for maintaining peace in the region is the delimitation of a zone in which strict comprehensive verification procedures can be applied. The establishment of such a zone would limit peaceful nuclear activities, build mutual confidence among the countries in the region and thus facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

4. One of the confidence-building measures proposed by Israel is to place safeguards in all its nuclear facilities. This measure is not feasible if there is one country in the region that refuses to place its facilities under safeguards. Although the States parties to the Treaty are required to disclose their nuclear activities, periodic inspections should be conducted in the various countries of the region as a means of control. Such inspections are already being conducted at short notice by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

5. If a country does not report its activities fully, in compliance with the relevant procedures, a spot check should be conducted to verify the accuracy of its report. The countries in the region should also be banned from conducting any kind of nuclear test that might undermine peace in the Middle East.

6. The support of the major nuclear Powers for the establishment of peace in the Middle East is therefore essential and security assurances must be provided. One option would be to provide negative security assurances, whereby the nuclear Powers would refrain from attacking or threatening to attack States parties, and positive security assurances, whereby they would provide assistance to a nation when it is attacked or threatened with attack by nuclear weapons.

7. Another means of establishing peace in the region is to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as called for by President Mubarak of Egypt.

8. In conclusion, nuclear weapons were invented by man and only man is responsible for and capable of destroying them, thus contributing to world peace.

Egypt

[Original: English]
[15 October 2007]

1. The commitment of Egypt to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is unequivocal. It was at the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Egypt that the item entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East" was first included in the agenda of the General Assembly in 1974. Since that date, the Assembly has annually adopted a resolution, by consensus since 1980, on this matter. Throughout the years, Egypt has continued to play a consistently leading role in promoting the objective of ridding the Middle East of the threat of nuclear weapons.

2. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and a signatory to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty), Egypt has clearly and unambiguously reiterated time and again its rejection of the nuclear option, since it represents a major threat to peace, security and stability in the Middle East. Today, Egypt notes with grave concern that while all other States of the Middle East have become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Israel regrettably persists in ignoring repeated calls for its adherence to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, thereby perpetuating a dangerous imbalance in the region that needs to be properly addressed.

3. The importance given during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is testimony to the commitment of the international community to the establishment of such a zone. The 2000 Review Conference, in following up the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, unanimously reaffirmed, in its final document, the importance of the accession of Israel to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon State and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Indeed, in its final document the 2000 Review Conference:

> recalls that in paragraph 4 of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East the Conference calls upon all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and to place their nuclear facilities under full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. The Conference notes, in this connection, that the report of the United Nations Secretariat on the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.2000/7) states that several States have acceded to the Treaty and that, with these accessions, all States of the region of the Middle East, with the exception of Israel, are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Conference welcomes the accession of these States and reaffirms the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East (see NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II), part I, sect., entitled "Article VII", para. 16).

4. In addition to urgent calls for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, inter alia, in the context of the Treaty review process, IAEA, the General Assembly and the Security Council called upon Israel in a number of resolutions to urgently place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of IAEA (Council resolution 487 (1981)) and recalled the objective of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East (Council resolution 687 (1991)).

5. Egypt is cognizant of the fact that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a difficult task. Indeed, each region of the world has its own characteristics, and each zone must be tailored to suit them. However, Egypt does not share the view that full-scale peace and fully developed political and economic relations among all States of the region are a prerequisite for the commencement of negotiations on the establishment of such a zone. If such an argument was correct, the Treaty of Tlatelolco or even the Treaty of Pelindaba would never have been concluded. Regrettably, conflict continues to rage in various parts of Africa to this very day, yet such conflicts were not invoked as reasons to prevent the negotiations on an African nuclear-weapon-free zone. Egypt firmly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in areas of tension and conflict does indeed contribute significantly to easing tensions, building confidence, preventing conflicts and developing peaceful relations and mutual cooperation.

6. Therefore, making negotiations on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East contingent upon an ever growing list of prerequisites is a sure recipe for failure. Egypt believes that the only prerequisite for negotiations on measures for the establishment of such zone in the Middle East is that States in the region have the political will. Viewing the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone as no more than an act that "sets the seal on a durable peace" is not a vision that is shared by Egypt. Furthermore, maintaining that full-fledged relations of peace must exist between Israel and its neighbours before talks on such a zone can commence is a contradictory argument.

7. For a nuclear-weapon-free zone to come about in any area of the world, a regional commitment to that objective must exist. As is shown by the annual adoption of a consensus resolution on the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone by the General Assembly, and by the adoption of consensus guidelines on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned, by the Disarmament Commission at its 1999 substantive session, such a commitment is present in the Middle East. In this connection, Egypt notes with satisfaction that there is agreement that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as a necessary step paving the way for the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction should be encouraged. Egypt considers that it is imperative that those commitments be turned into concrete actions if they are to have a determining and positive impact on the Middle East peace process.

8. However, while Egypt continues to table its annual resolution entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", it cannot help but regrettably notice that the adoption of the resolution by consensus is not complemented by an equally consensual commitment to its implementation. Indeed, not all of the States Members of the United Nations seem committed to acting effectively with a view to ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons. Few

concrete steps, if any, have been taken with the aim of realizing the objectives of the resolution. This situation endures despite the international community's invigorated commitment to the cause of non-proliferation in the world following the criminal and tragic events of 11 September 2001.

9. The commencement of these negotiations would represent a serious breakthrough in the efforts geared towards building confidence in the region, efforts the objectives of which are getting increasingly difficult to realize, in an atmosphere of insecurity as a nuclear threat continues to loom over the region, provoking even more risks and challenges of proliferation.

10. The international community has paid much attention to recent cases of proliferation concern, sometimes seeking new approaches, and has always devoted significant resources to the task. Yet, Israel continues to escape similar attention and is subjected to little more than lukewarm verbal calls for adherence to the Treaty and the application of IAEA safeguards.

11. In this regard, the following key developments have taken place since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 61/56:

(a) Egypt continued to stress the importance of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in all relevant multilateral forums, both regional and international, and has conducted bilateral consultations in Cairo as well as in capitals across the globe to that end, including in key countries in the Middle East;

(b) Since the beginning of the current review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Egypt has been keen to address the issue of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and to call upon the international community to take specific measures towards that goal pursuant to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the outcome of the 2000 Review Conference;

(c) During the first Preparatory Committee of the 2010 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference held in Vienna in April and May 2007, Egypt presented, inter alia, a working paper on the implementation of the aforementioned 1995 resolution and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Furthermore, Egypt will work throughout the 2010 review cycle with a view to the adoption of an action-oriented outcome on the matter in 2010;

(d) At the nineteenth Summit Conference of the Arab League Council, held in Riyadh on 28 and 29 March 2007, Arab Heads of State and Government adopted resolution No. 382 entitled "The formulation of a unified Arab position to take practical steps to free the region of the Middle East from nuclear weapons", in which they expressed concern over the negative developments internationally and regionally in the field of arms control and disarmament and decided to evaluate and reconsider the Arab policy that has been pursued over the past decades in the light of international developments;

(e) At the thirty-fourth session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in Islamabad from 15 to 17 May 2007, Foreign Ministers adopted resolution No. 24/34-POL entitled "Condemnation of the Zionist regime for possession of nuclear capability to develop nuclear arsenals". The Ministers expressed their grave concern over the clandestine nuclear activities and acquisition

of a nuclear capability by Israel, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the international peace and security as well as the security of neighbouring and other States, and condemned Israel for 'continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals. The Ministers thus reiterated their support for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction as an ultimate goal that would build on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as its first step;

(f) Also at the thirty-fourth session of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Ministers adopted resolution No. 19/34 P, entitled "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and South-East Asia", in which they warned of the serious consequences arising from the fact that all States of the Middle East have become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons except for Israel, which has not acceded to the Treaty, has not placed its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguard agreements of the IAEA and has not declared its intention to do so;

(g) At its fifty-first session, held in Vienna from 17 to 21 September 2007, the IAEA General Conference adopted a resolution submitted by Egypt on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East. The resolution provides, inter alia, for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and calls for the application of IAEA comprehensive safeguards in all States of the region. It was regrettable, however, that a number of States which have traditionally supported the resolution chose to abstain from voting on it this year, which is illustrative of a very concerning trend against achieving the objective of the full application of IAEA comprehensive safeguards in all States in the Middle East.

12. Egypt will continue to pursue the objective of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East at the earliest date based on international resolutions, including relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the outcome of the 1995 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review and Extension Conference and that of the 2000 Review Conference. It will pursue the 1974 initiative on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, paving the way for the eventual realization of its April 1990 initiative for the establishment, in the Middle East, of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction. In this context, Egypt will continue to seek the support of all States committed to ridding the world of the threat of nuclear weapons, at both the regional and global levels.